

Law professor reminisces about UNC experiences

By MARY JO DUNNINGTON
Staff Writer

Louis Bilionis is glad to be back at UNC. He proclaims himself "not the type to reminisce," but he is full of old stories and reflections about the value of his experience here.

At his office in UNC's School of Law, he props his feet up on his desk, chews on a pencil and talks about being editor of The Daily Tar Heel, dreading the undergraduate science requirement and taking Thursday nights on Franklin Street seriously — sometimes. But his favorite topic is the wide range of opportunities available for students at UNC.

Born and raised in Massachusetts, Bilionis visited UNC as a finalist for the Morehead Scholarship and fell in love with Chapel Hill. "I saw the opportunities here were boundless, and the students were doing interesting things," he said. His decision to attend UNC was made more easily when he learned he had received the scholarship.

"The tradition and the setting make it a great place to come," he said. "It's a very good place to spend four years."

Bilionis spent much of his time as an undergraduate in the DTH office. He began working on the paper as a sophomore and served as editor his senior year. "For me the DTH was very consuming," he said. "It was like a full-time job. It was invigorating and challenging, and I took the responsibility seriously. It also took a toll on my class attendance."

He considered journalism as a career. "I wasn't real sure what I was going to do when I left college."

Bilionis graduated from UNC in 1979 with a double major in eco-

nomics and English. In 1982 he received a law degree from Harvard University. He has worked as a clerk for an appellate judge in Baltimore, Md., as an attorney with a firm in Boston, Mass., and as a public defender in Raleigh. Last July he began his appointment as a professor in the law school.

Bilionis remains active in the legal community in North Carolina, especially in the area of capital punishment. He said he finds satisfaction in the exchange of ideas and the opportunity to explore many facets of issues gained through teaching law.

"To teach here is a real pleasure," he said. "It's like being a student again. Professors are themselves students. They learn from each other and from the experience of trying to teach you. We're all exploring and trying out ideas."

Because he lives in Raleigh and spends his time on campus in the law school, Bilionis says he does not have much contact with undergraduates.

"I understand better now why the graduate students always seemed to be in a separate world," he said. He notes that the school does not promote interaction between undergraduate and graduate students, and the campus geography also makes any interaction unlikely.

"Integration is important in a university community," he said. "We should try to break down the artificial barriers and force our paths to cross from time to time. That's how you find enrichment."

Bilionis has noticed some changes in Chapel Hill since he was a student. The town and campus have grown "in leaps and bounds," he said. "The dividing lines between Durham and Chapel Hill have collapsed. I remember when Darryl's

(restaurant) was at the outer reaches of our world here."

Traffic is heavier, and more students have cars, he said. The Smith Center makes it easier to get basketball tickets, and more games are televised. Student social life has changed somewhat, he adds, with the increased development of Franklin Street and the change in the legal drinking age.

As a whole, the student body is more conservative than it was 10 years ago, he said. The students in his classes hold more moderate and conservative views than Bilionis and his classmates held.

When asked about the student protests currently causing such controversy, he says the activism "is not uncommon for Carolina."

"There were protests then, too," he said. "That's a virtue of the University community. It forces you to see other sides of an issue and to respect others' views."

Does he have any advice for students now experiencing many of the same things he experienced 10 years ago?

"One might ask, 'Who am I to

give advice?' " He grins. "Open your mind. Be imaginative. Have a respect for individuality, because it enhances your own self-esteem. Take advantage of all that is going on around you, because it will educate you, not necessarily in a strictly academic sense, but in ways that will surprise you again and again."

College is a time to do "some serious growing for four years," he said. "It's a time to learn as well as to do some really dumb things." He laughs, perhaps thinking of a memory he doesn't want to share. "Of the things I did in college, there was nothing remarkable, but nothing trivial."

Bilionis says he prefers devoting his energy to the present rather than looking too far ahead. As for his personal life, he enjoys cooking, listening to all kinds of music and being an avid fan of baseball and Carolina basketball.

"There are lots of things I'd like to do," he said. "There's never enough time to do everything." Leaning back in his chair, he smiles. "I'm having a good time."



DTH/Steven Exum

Law professor Louis Bilionis is a former UNC undergraduate

Wilder play to examine cycles of history

By ANDREW LAWLER
Staff Writer

The Lab Theatre presents its penultimate production of the semester with the opening of "The Skin of Our Teeth" by Thornton Wilder this weekend.

Kasey Jones, a senior from Texas and the show's director, said the play is about the beginning, middle and end of mankind by following the life of the Antrobus family.

In act one Wilder introduces George Antrobus, a scientist who has

discovered the alphabet and the wheel during the ice age. Act two has him elected world president — shortly before the Biblical flood. Act three shows the family after an unspecified war.

Jones emphasized the play's theme of history repeating itself. "It's about the circularness of our universe, the repetition of war and peace, and lessons that we've not yet learned in spite of the repetition." Despite this potentially grandiose theme, Jones emphasized that the show was

"extremely funny, like life is funny."

The universality of the play's theme and characters was stressed by Joel Johnson, a graduate student who plays Antrobus. "George is an 'everyman.' Now when we say that we usually mean 'anyman,' but George really is everyman. He represents the driving force that moves humanity forward."

Bradley Coxe, a sophomore, plays Henry, the Antrobus' son. Henry, who changed his name from Cain — yes, that Cain — is the chaotic element of the play, according to Coxe.

"He feels blocked in; he hates rules," he said of his character. Coxe said he believes students will get a lot out of the production. "It's very entertaining; there's so much funny and silly irreverent stuff that the message just slips in."

"Skin of Our Teeth" will be performed in the Lab Theatre on Sunday and Monday at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m., and at 5 p.m. on Tuesday. The Lab is located in the basement of Graham Memorial. Reservations are available on the first floor of Graham and are strongly encouraged.

Planetarium show seeks answers to origin of star

By JESSICA YATES
Staff Writer

The "Star of Bethlehem" holiday presentation has begun its 40th season at the Morehead Planetarium. The annual show focuses on what this Biblical star might have really been.

The show reviews historical data in trying to determine when the star was actually seen. Possible astronomical explanations for the star are then provided for the audience.

"There is not a lot of clear evidence as to the exact date that the Star of Bethlehem appeared. We look at this, first," said Lee Shapiro, the planetarium director. "Then we look at some of the possible explanations as to what the star actually was, such as a supernova, or a comet or an effect from the alignment of the planets."

The idea for the presentation came from the work done by some astronomers in the 17th century. Apparently, a lot of their curiosity is shared by the students of UNC, since Shapiro calls the "Star of Bethlehem" show one of their most popular programs.

There are some additions to this year's presentation. "There are nearly double the amount of visuals from last year," Shapiro said. "We now have better ways of demonstrating what's going on."

Morehead Planetarium's "Star of Bethlehem" show can be seen daily at 8 p.m., with matinees at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

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